

Princess's Spirit Life Ideas #2:

Yes, You Can Change The World Too!

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For more Princess's Spirit Ideas

There are more fiction and non-fiction titles by TaraElla relating to the Princess's Spirit concept.

TaraElla also maintains a blog and (upcoming) show inspired by the Princess's Spirit, called The TaraElla Show.

Visit **www.taraella.com** to find out more.

Chapter 1

Yes, The World Needs You

You aren't the President or Prime Minister of a country. You aren't even 'famous'. You aren't even a journalist in a newspaper or magazine with broad circulation. Chances are, you are just a 'regular person', whose everyday contacts are their family and circle of friends. Surely, you get to vote every three, four or five years, but the politicians never listen to us anyway, right? Given all of the above, how can you hope to change the world?

As a result of thinking like this, many people just observe the world go by. And as a result of that, some things never really change. Those in 'power' continue to get away with not respecting what people really want, whilst claiming to be 'democratically elected'. People around us remain ill informed about the world and its many issues. Even if each of us theoretically have a vote to use, many of us don't really know how to exercise it. It's no wonder in many Western countries the voting

rate is well below 50%, the only exceptions being where voting is compulsory. In other words, we just give up. No wonder things never change.

But you don't have to be a politician, celebrity or journalist to help change things - nor are these people as powerful as they look. Information and ideas are power, and in the modern information technology age, anyone can (and should) contribute to this pool. And if you study politics and the history of political movements closely, you will find that politicians, celebrities and journalists are just vehicles for information and ideas to get passed around, discussed and acted upon. After all, it would be electorally risky (and undemocratic) for the President or Prime Minister to embrace ideas that don't at least have near majority support. It is therefore up to people like you to change the world, even if you are only a small part of the whole puzzle.

In fact, every social change is like a puzzle, made up of many small parts. The first important pieces are those people who first think of an idea. Gender equality, racial equality, the civil rights movement, they all started this way. Then ideas get passed around, and more people accept them, and in turn pass them on, filling in more pieces of the puzzle. Some important connector pieces may be in the form of celebrities or journalists, who can spread the idea around quicker. But it doesn't generally get to that point without the other pieces already being there. Furthermore, in the modern age, ideas are still mostly spread peer-to-peer, rather than via distant sources. Finally, only when the puzzle is nearly complete, will politicians enter the picture.

Therefore, you are an important part of social change - at least if you accept this responsibility.

And it doesn't have to be a full time job. In this book, we will explore the ways in which you can give effect to your values, beliefs and vision, contributing your pieces of the puzzle to the many developments in our world.

Chapter 2

Go Make Yourself Useful

2.1 An army gone to waste

Studies have shown that as of recently, more teenagers than not want to become a famous icon of some sort. While some just dream of the big money that often comes with it, a lot of these people want to do something for culture, just like how other children want to do something for the sciences, arts, or sports. Most of them are part of the optimistic generation, and therefore are not really deterred by the big odds against them in this area. These are big odds here, however. We all know that in the current system probably only 1 in 1,000,000 people get to do ANYTHING at all for the culture, and that is an optimistic estimate. The conservative estimate, taking into account the fact that many cultural institutions are in fact controlled from the top, and you don't get freedom with your public persona until you earn it, makes this even more steep.

So how about the 99.9999%? In our experience, they survive, get jobs and live peacefully, it seems. But they never do get their chance at contributing to culture. Which is sad. Our society and markets are supposed to satisfy wants and needs, but this very big one certainly is not satisfied in any way. If we work hard and earn enough, we can live in mansions and go on round the world tours, if we want a certain qualification we can study hard for it at university. But it seems that there is no way to become a significant contributor to culture for most people.

This all is a result of the failure of the current 'system' to bring more talent in for cultural creation. There are no fair exams or tryouts to get there, nor are there education programs you can join - too often it is determined by social connections.

2.2 But things are changing now

In case you were wondering, the preceding section was written in 2008. In the past, even in the previous decade, individuals were indeed quite powerless. Despite the dreams many young people have had, you cannot realistically contribute much to the cultural conversation, unless you were part of some elite circles.

But things are changing, and relatively rapidly, compared to the timeframe in which change has historically happened. And the effects are obvious: for example, as of this writing, the marriage equality movement is only 23 years old, but it has been successful in all but six Western countries (Northern Ireland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Australia). In historical times, a movement would not have advanced nearly this far in less than a generation. It just shows how things can change

much more rapidly nowadays, due to the rapid spread of ideas, and the generation of momentum from collective action, which can be as simple as retweeting a message.

And just to recap how far we have come, let's review something else I wrote late last decade:

*Forget the supposed technological advancements. After all, this decade has been the worst one for the advancement of hardware computer technology (Intel predicted that we would clear 10GHz by 2010, we did clear 1GHz by 2000 and 3GHz by 2001, but we are still yet to clear 4GHz today!)

I believe that 'amateur' media creation is the biggest achievement in the 2000s. Just look at YouTube, Lulu, Blogging services, MySpace and Facebook. They are the most popular websites

out there today, and have transformed the leisure, if not working, lives of many individuals.*

But we've moved on much further in the seven years since. Whilst MySpace is no longer a major player in social media, modern social media platforms have made sharing information and ideas much easier, making MySpace circa 2009 look really useless by comparison. It's now standard to have live twitter conversations to accompany current affairs and other television programs and for such programs to display selected tweets in real time, for example. The panellists are not the only ones doing the discussion, they are effectively joined by thousands of other voices. Platforms like twitter and facebook also encourage sharing everything from news items to opinion articles and blogs, meaning that it's easier than ever to do your part to pass on ideas you support. No wonder

the ranks of activists for everything have swollen so rapidly in the last few years.

And you don't even need to be a writer to be an agent of social change. If text is not your medium, then maybe music is. The proliferation of original and cover artists on YouTube has not only meant that the level of music artistry is at an all time high (if you know where to look), but can have important social functions too. For example, when Macklemore released his marriage equality anthem Same Love in 2013, there were cover versions representing specific aspects of the movement, for example a version featuring a narrative of a lesbian woman of colour, and an Australia specific version, which contained a plea addressed to then Prime Minister Julia Gillard (who has since changed her mind on the matter, even though it was after her Prime Ministership had ended).

But all this possibility would mean nothing if we don't know how to harness it well. Specifically, what perspective of life can we share with the world? You may think you have nothing unique to say, but in most cases, that's not true.

Everyone has a story worth sharing. And everyone can have a way of doing so too, be it books (including e-books), music, blog articles, or even just 140 character twitter messages. Every bit is useful. You may be an original cultural creator, or you may be a connector who helps the world find the great ideas out there, which is just as important.

In the remainder of this chapter and the next, we will explore things about you and your life that you can potentially share with the world, and why it may be important to share it, using whatever medium you prefer.

2.3 Why Making Your Voice Heard is Important

We all want to be the most empowered we can living in this world. And yet hate and discrimination are crippling so many of us every day. We all want to be free from misunderstanding and bullying. And yet so many of us are suffering from just these things every day.

Why, after all those years of enlightenment, do we still suffer from these problems? Many say that it is the bad side of human nature that is the cause. But let me offer another explanation: we have not been trying hard enough. We have not been trying hard enough to be our real selves, to tell the world about our stories, to tell the world about who we really are and what we really suffer from, what we can contribute to the world and where we need help from the world.

If everybody told their stories truthfully and everyone else listened, there would be a lot more help, empathy and sympathy around the world. In turn, that would solve 90% of the problems that we face (yes, a little more empathy would direct a lot more resources into the End Poverty by 2050 campaign, something which I really believe in).

This is not going to be easy to do, but it must start from us. Start telling your story to the world, and in return, listen to others' stories too. Do not shy away from the 'uglier' side of your own story, for it is likely to be where other people like you may be able to get help from. In turn, do not be judgmental against other people's stories. Any dose of hate, discrimination or so-called 'moral panic' is not helpful, nor is political correctness. All we need is to be open to what each other has to say, and

be optimistic and work hard in trying to change things for the better.

2.4 Standing up for your Causes

Cultural Creators should stand up for the causes that they believe in - lest nobody cares anymore. It is just part of the social responsibility of all citizens to do this.

Most of the 'culture' created by the 'innovators' that we have followed may just be a bit of entertainment. But it is also through a member having a voice that many unheard, disadvantaged and misunderstood minorities are able to speak of their concerns, fears, dreams and aspirations. Without these people speaking up, we won't even have the knowledge to cater to enough people to build a big family or make dreams come true for enough people.

The people who I wish to see have more ways of speaking up with technological advances and the changing world are the 'independent' cultural creators. The non-mainstream cultural innovators, those that can represent these unheard minorities, are often not among the safe, popular acts that commercial machines would choose to promote, and therefore giving more to the independent voice is the only way we will truly hear more voices.

2.5 The Importance of 'Amateur' Media Creation

just what use is this army of citizen writers, reporters, journalists and so on? And why should you join the revolution now?

Most of the 'professional' media we consume today are businesses that involve big money. They are there specifically for that reason - which I cannot really lay blame on, as money = professional services is how a capitalist society works. However, the fact that they serve to pander to the popular taste means that the content will always underrepresent some opinions, lifestyles and cultures in society. As a result, if mainstream media were the only source of information and entertainment, many groups would feel isolated and lonely. If less diverse voices are heard, then a society will be more prone to ignore its diversity in its culture and policies. It would also be hard for any

campaign save for the most commonly agreed on ones to organise, as early advocates will find themselves each a lone voice, ignored by the media and have no ways to share their ideas with a larger population. And as all great movements grow from small movements, a mass media society would come to a standstill gradually.

Some groups have found their own way through it. For example, conservative Christians in America have set up their own parallel cultural network so that their in-crowd can receive information and entertainment that is constructive to their own culture, and can have a way to organise and galvanise in-crowd opinions for movements. They have only been able to do this because churches are wealthy institutions. However, most other cultural groups cannot really do the same. The fact that this group has had unreasonable influence in

recent years is due to the fact that other groups have not been able to do similarly.

The rise of citizen media creators correct this, and somewhat level the playing field again for all groups. Less well funded groups, like people concerned with the environment, refugee rights, global poverty and equal rights for all, have been able to make significant gains in the internet era because of this.

2.6 Stand up for Your Beliefs, and be a Role Model for them!

If you don't stand up for your own beliefs, nobody else will. Your beliefs have come to you via life experiences, because you know how people can be suffering if you don't.

And standing up for what you feel about is the best civic duty a good member of society can do. If nobody stood up for civil rights, women's rights and gay rights, we would still be living as they did in the 1950s and before - falsely believe that we are doing good while we are actually hurting a lot of people, and without anyone to tell us we are wrong. If not for the 'youth movement' at around the same time, young people today would still be beholden to huge amounts of 'traditional authority' and their fresh ideas not allowed to soar.

Besides speaking out, you also have to be a good role model for what you stand up for. You can't stand up for equality and retain traces of racism, for example. If you want to help everyone to live a good life, you can't just sit there and whinge. Therefore, you are improving who you are in the process too. In fact, you will be living a meaningful and healthy life in more ways, which will contribute to your personal health and success in life, rewards fit for those who would stand up for the good of disadvantaged people and against unfair circumstances.

2.7 What Politics Cannot Do

Politics can do some things, but not everything. We need to pay attention to politics and make our vote count. This is because we don't want a government that only favours one group (e.g. big business or people of particular beliefs). Government is also essential to help 'adjust' the balance of the forces out there when the market forces fail to, so that everyone can have a fair go at things, so that everyone can have the maximum amount of freedom to do what is right by them.

Once upon a time, some people thought a good government was the solution to everything. But can a government, a relatively small bunch of people, solve the problems of a whole nation, sometimes problems that they haven't even heard of before? Probably not. Thus we need a government that makes it possible for people to have the resources to solve the problems, a

government that is non-judgmental and treat everyone with equality and respect, but this in itself will not solve all the problems.

Voting at an election to make sure we get this kind of government is a must for every eligible citizen. But then we must move forward to do the next step. That is, to actively make the communities we associate with get a good deal out of this world, because we know them better than the rest of the world, and we can help make things better within these communities and make the bridges out better too. We also need to help everyone else out there who is disadvantaged too, so they can have basic human dignity, to have the space to do what is right by them, and to have a fair go at life. This is the dream, and if we all work on our part, we will get there.

Chapter 3

The Self Made Star Ideal

3.1 Introduction

Self Made Stars are one category of people that I admire, that I wish to be among. Self Made Stars may not have the spotlight, red carpet invites and the like. However, they are not afraid to be of their own style and do things their own way.

Most importantly, as described above, self made stars can be red carpet stars, or they can be everyday people. One of our more important aims is to gather ideas to help everyday people get the voice to become a more effective self made star. This is being made more and more possible by modern communication technology such as the internet, but we also need to actively dream of the dream that everyone can be a self made star before it can come true. On the other hand, red carpet stars have too much attention and their lives are too controlled by the popular opinion and commercial viability

out there. This is one problem we are interested in looking into too.

So Why Should You be a Self Made Star?

First of all, let's make some things clear. To live a life where you cannot dream of better is quite sad indeed. However, in today's cynical world, more and more of us find ourselves in that predicament. This book is about ending all that. Why are people so discontented now? Why do some people do destructive things enjoyably?

One major reason is because they lack ways to put their mental energy to use.

Being a self made star is about living the life of your dreams without needing others to give you permission to. It is about putting your mental energy to better things.

However, we need to first be stars. You see, stars, like the ones you see in Hollywood, have a bigger tendency to dream than your average neighbour. You may say it's the money, which I would say is partially true. However, we don't need to money to feel the spirit of being a star - all you need are thoughts that will free you from the cynicism that is surrounding us. They also have a better tendency to put into great causes and feel optimistic about the world. You may say it is the publicity they get - but who needs publicity to do that? It is all about the mindset, I believe.

Being a self made star is about the mindset.

Another thing - no more negativity. We should also create opportunities for ourselves to use our mental energy better. For example, instead

of thinking about how it is a 'not so good earth', we could appreciate the good side to life and how we can improve the world. Instead of just trying to be destructive or critical in fashion and musical styles, maybe we can find a way of personal expressions ourselves.

3.2 Self Made Star Philosophy

It's not hard to try out what you want to do

So many of my friends have once hopefully told me what they really wanted to do, yet retreated only a few minutes later, realizing that they wouldn't have a chance. Actually, it is this mentality. Not the reality itself that kills the dream. Since the first step is probably to keep the dream alive, a much better thing will be to continue dreaming big and start doing things in that area, no matter if it seems small. After a while, the path out often starts to emerge. So start today!

Just try!

Ever dreamt of doing something and then thinking that you are too small to do it? What if you could really do it - wouldn't you have missed out? Don't let the vastness of this world overwhelm you, don't let anything they say or how the world seems stop you from trying to do what you want! Think about this: If nobody tried, who would have made our lives better?

For Aspirers

As a person, wanting a voice so you can get your ideas going really shouldn't be too much of an ask. We should actually pull together and strive for it, and return the 'voice' to us (as opposed to a few red carpeters who happened to be liked by some organisation and hyped).

New Inroads

This is true for roads leading to any place: as old roads become congested, worn and hard to use, new roads have to be built. And they will always be built. There are three lessons behind this: 1. Look for the new roads- they are much better to use, 2. If you happen to be stranded somewhere, perhaps you could be the one to build the new inroads?, 3. If you happen to be the builder please make it accessible, not too hard to use, make it last by ensuring that the former two conditions last, but accommodate for any new roads that will inevitably arise.

3.3 Things that Self Made Stars Do

Do Your Thing

Don't be afraid to do your thing, even if it is not the conventional thing. Remember, without dreams and innovations we would be stuck in the forest still today! So whatever it is, (as long as it is not immoral), you should find an appropriate and helpful way to build your dreams. What's more is that on the way you will also find some very interesting things....

Build Your Own Future!

We young people should help to build our own world's future - after all if there are no environmentally aware people among us - what will we live in 30 years? If nobody would care about the disadvantaged, will they get better on their own? These are just a few examples, in fact there are many place which you may be interested in and that they need your help! What about it's our future. Think about it: if there are no good cultural icons in us out there, where will culture be in 15 years? Or if there are no technology innovators would there be progress? So whatever area you're interested in, apply yourself now.

Creating the Magic

Even as a star, the magic that they create for you out there is not consistent or reliable. There are times that come and you don't expect it. And there are also times that have gone and you miss so much. Many people I've met recently have been stuck in the latter situation. Symptom 1 is: They usually yell 'Wow, I'm bored'. Symptom 2 is a deteriorating efficiency at work. and Symptom 3 is deteriorating health, especially mentally. However, helplessness seems to be the common underlying theme here. 'People often complain that they can't help themselves.'

Ask yourself, what you would do in this situation? Sit there and do nothing? Let them get you? Let the growing shadow of darkness gradually engulf you? Or walk actively towards the source of the light? I would choose the

latter, because it means I don't have to be engulfed. For example, I would like to be hosting a real radio show.

If there are not enough parties around I will throw my own. If there is nothing to do I will create something for me and my friends to have fun with. If there is nothing special happening that day then it is time for me to do something about it. Starting by small things like having your friends sign an entry in your diary would be good.

Raise Your Voice

Afraid that you'll be drowned out in the sea of opinions? Feeling not big enough to make a difference anymore? Try raising your voice! Use whatever way you can to be yourself and talk about all you want to. When you are feeling that you are doing your own thing, you will find a way. For example, out there, 'independent artists' of all media churn out good stuff almost every day, from obscure little websites big material is added every day, and the audience is getting to them too. So start now - you can!

Strength

We know that there is unfairness out there in the world. We know that people are being hurt every day. Yet we are often too afraid to take a stance for it. But our guilty conscience knows that if we don't do so, people will continue to hurt.

To make matters worse, to help people in itself is often controversial, the controversy is brought on by the fact that some people don't want the world to change, and has used justification to make necessary change look bad. You know their sense of right and wrong is misinformed, by looking to the examples in history, and by looking to how good usually prevails in the end. You know that, from history, if you delay your actions and take more discussions with these people, it will be many lives wasted in the years in between. Yet it is

easier just to debate than to act in ways which will upset some people.

Yet your moral conscience is right. To uphold universal love and compassion is the highest goal, and to defer standing up for what we need to do is to defer our responsibilities. We need to be strong. And in the end, the reward of seeing people getting the treatment they deserve is more than worth all the hard work.

Follow Your Heart

People say the phrase 'follow your heart' more and more these days but actually people follow their hearts less and less. In the advent of advice being so plentiful and mistakes being so expensive, people consult more and think less. However, this is problematic. One can only think for oneself. Others' choices are often unsuitable and may even lead to unhappiness or potential not fully achieved. Therefore, when you are required to make a choice yourself, do it yourself!

Improve the World - It's in Your Hands.

I believe that, if we work together, everything from general living conditions to global poverty can be improved, and we can work towards the ideal of everyone having a voice and a great life. For example we can all work to improve everyone's access to a great life, and improve productivity for everyone, so that they can do more and still have more space.

If you have an idea, start to build things around it in the ways that you can - post it somewhere to let people know, tell people, even start projects. Don't wait for someone else to do it - they won't do your lot - and you shouldn't really complain just for that!

The Friendly Ideal

We should all strive to make friends with each other, and support each other. We should extend what good things we have out, and we should do this by good exchange in an atmosphere of togetherness. Of course this means putting down historical barriers and embracing a vision in which we can all be together.

If I want to do/create something, I do not want it to become a weapon for one group against another. Therefore I run by the idea where everybody can come together to enjoy a good life, the benefits of what each other have got and can share, peacefully and in understanding true meaning.

Say What You Can!

You may think what you are thinking or what you know is not important but think again. There are many out there who may benefit from hearing you talk. So don't shy away from sharing your goodies. Also, if we are all going to have equal benefit the wider context of society, the only way to ensure this is to have the concerned people stand up for themselves. So every bit of effort is important.

Populism, what to do?

The popular cry is often useful. From the abolition of slavery, the women and civil rights movements, to the fair workplace and anti-war movements, they all have a big component of the popular cry. Thus the popular cry is often essential for giving a voice to the usually unheard and has an important role in bringing justice.

But in other times the irrationality and fear of crowds can do things that utterly destroy what we have (e.g. excessive fear can destroy liberty). So giving into popular cries completely propel us to nowhere. Principles like liberty, justice, peace and harmony, integrity etc. must be kept, or the consequences will be horrific.

So hear the popular voice as one big voice that has things to be resolved. Everyone should take their concerns in and design solutions that accommodate these concerns. In turn, groups

with concerns and ideas can also communicate them to the 'electorate'. But, no matter what solution is decided on, it should have been OK (although may not be preferred) for every good citizen possible, and preserve the very principles that make the liberal democracy that. Remember that even Hitler was popularly elected.

Trends

Trends come and go, and when they come they become dominant. Many also have a lasting impact on culture.

There is nothing so wrong with new trends even if the older generation hate it. Trends are the background for many other social activities in the period that they are dominant, and if you realize what is really going on behind the trends you will usually see that most are quite healthy or at least not really harmful. Trends are just tidal waves in the greater scheme of gradual cultural change.

The most worrying thing about trends is that trends may become so dominant that it occludes the chance for alternatives to be successful. This is one of the reasons we should

guard against group thought. If everybody only support the same things other valuable things will have little support and a lot may be lost. Therefore, we should expand our horizons beyond the current trends. We should try to support valuable things (be it books, music, culture....) even when they do not seem to be too loved by the people around us, or when they have gone out of fashion. We should not alienate ourselves from things simply because they do not fit into the current trend. We should try to appreciate them first.

Stars should be Sane in the face of Groupthought

In any institution run by votes, dangerous groupthought must be avoided. It is the start of bitter, useless and sometimes evil factionalism, ending in a situation where further good can't be achieved and evil is harboured. A groupthought group running a society relying on votes from the its citizens is on the way to no good, since any evil idea could snatch the whole situation easily by infiltrating into groupthought. Groupthought is the end of the pursuit of wisdom and the worth of individuals. Avoid it at all costs.

Therefore, look further than what's in front of you. Try to know a little more about the world around you each day. For example, go to a news source you don't usually go to or search on the net for alternative answers. Keep an eye out for

all sorts of philosophies and some of the latest scientific theories and developments. And yet, keep your mind clear and your intuition good - only a clean mind can appreciate things well. That's the way to know a little more.

Many people like to call themselves individualists. However, when cultural police patrol the boundaries of acceptable influence in all walks of life, groupthought and tribalism operates and hijacks individualism and use it as a weapon for their sometimes evil ends. True individualism involves individuals looking at this wide world freely and forming their views freely. Any compromise is a threat to all wisdom and all visions for good communities: as I've explained in previous situations, tribalism undermines the principle of individuals making choices. So if you live life under the mantle of individualism, make sure that you are not hijacked by groupthought.

3.4 Do You Need to Change your Personality / Style?

Ah, this is probably the most public and acceptable of all the myths out there today. There are whole books written on it, even a whole industry based on it. Apparently some personalities are bad and successful and effective people don't have them. As a result, if we want to be successful, we need to change our personalities to be like those who are successful. But you can only say this if you ignore the vast range of personalities among the people who are successful in today's world. Bill Gates is widely known to not be the easiest to get along with, while Oprah Winfrey is much more supportive. There are obsessive people and relaxed people, creative people and robotic people, romantic people and practical people, who have all found success.

The key is not to change your personality, but to build on it, and avoid its bad side. Those people who succeed in doing this do well in life. They become the passionate, the analytical, the innovative and so on. Those people who don't become every negative type - the violent, the cynical, the unrealistic and so on. The first step is to understand our personality, not reject it, because it is our greatest friend and our greatest foe at the same time. It is our greatest friend because it is one of the biggest tools in our toolbox to help us do what we are destined to, as showcased by the great masters of influence, from Oprah to Mandela to Clinton, who each have different personalities but are equally captivating. It is our greatest foe because if we get on the wrong side of it, it can really ruin our life, as seen in many sad cases in life (unnamed of course, but numerous) who have tried to do something that is really not for them and failed miserably (and hence why they are all unnamed).

Why are so many people in the world afraid of showing, let alone studying their personality? It is clear that they are afraid that they will not be accepted, because they do not have the 'perfect personality'. Worse, some of the atypical ones, those that are probably most destined for greatness due to their uniqueness, are afraid that to be different is to be a 'freak'. But this is an illusion! And, this should be clear when you have a look at the people that have succeeded in gaining popularity, setting trends, selling well or making a mark in the scheme of things. All of them are 'different'! Many of those who have made the greatest contributions are exactly those who were bullied at school because they were different, not those 'perfect' types you find in management books. Sadly, other 'different' people have instead gone and wasted their lives on withdrawing from life or even becoming a real pest to society (much to the delight of those who want to prove the 'perfect

personality' theories), because they just can't see this.

But clearly, the choice is up to you. The world needs every personality, just not any one of them in their bad or toxic forms. If everybody were about the same, and nobody bothered to create their own 'brand', the world would be standing still and there will be virtually no big progresses in all areas of life. So, my advice is, cherish your 'difference' and use it well!

Chapter 4

Some Change We Would Like To See

A person should encourage and work for the social changes they most believe in. Whilst the ideas of the preceding chapters can apply to a wide range of social causes, I cannot tell you what causes to support. You have to make that decision yourself.

Staying informed about society and social issues, both locally and globally, should adequately inform us of the possible causes we can choose from, over time. However, sharing ideas with friends is another important way to discover new causes. And in the spirit of this, I will share with you some social changes my friends and I support. This chapter contains notes I have made on social changes we would

like to see, according to Princess's Spirit principles.

Start Moving Away from Hurt

How much hurt are we creating for ourselves?
You only have to watch the news to know.
Wars, terror, people making others lose, people
putting down other people are all man made.

Why isn't finding a cure to all of this at the top
of the international agenda yet? Is it too hard?
No, in fact it can begin in any individual, it's as
easy as becoming conscious not to do those
things from today.

Let's Inspire our Next Generation

Let's think of ways to inspire our next generation (and generations beyond that) to think of a better world for all and help achieve that dream. If our dream is going to have any way of succeeding, there must be people coming up who are equally as passionate about the dream who we can pass our torch onto.

When, for example, my generation reaches middle age two decades later, today's little children will be where we are now, and they will define youth culture. If they are educated from when young about diversity, the importance of equal opportunity, and the world as a family for all, then they would easily integrate these values with everyday life and the culture that they help create. Having this dream in their heads when they are growing up will also shield them from the harm of being 'mugged by

reality', something that has been quite a problem for many generations.

The Politics of Love

The politics of love are clearly going to be based on tolerance. If you love people, you accept them for who they are. You will be understanding in your worldview.

You also don't want to discriminate to make people's lives harder unnecessarily.

The politics of love are also based on forgiveness.

Nobody can say that they never make mistakes, and we don't want people to suffer for it by revenge. Rather, we try to help people not to make the same mistakes again.

However, the politics of love does not mean that we just sit by and let anything happen. For example, drunk attacks of violence that result in the intimidation of minorities and women in particular are something that we want to stop. This is the reason why promoting lifestyles that

prevent that from happening are just as important in the politics of love.

As We Evolve... (My Hopeful Story of the Human Race)

In the beginning we were primitive creatures, fighting for food and shelter.

Then we still had these struggles, but in a more civil way. It was at that time that religion and spirituality got introduced too.

Later on, we were awakened to better possibilities than to keep fighting each other - we began to be able to provide for ourselves, and began to be able to see that the fighting was damaging us and at times unnecessary.

Soon we began to think more and more about our condition. People from around the world came together, and although there were some clashes, they got resolved now that we see clear that we are in the same boat.

Finally, the fighting ceased, and we began to support each other through life's journey, and

thus we now had proper attention focused on the important things, like our spirituality.

End of War #1 - Why we can be so Near Now

Tribal societies have survived by fighting each other and gaining food over other tribes and other animals. That was probably how war began. In time, people began identifying in terms of new tribes - the nation state, religion and so forth. In the past 50 years, however, the tide has turned against war being a constant. We started to recognise that in modern civil society war is no longer a necessity, an unnecessary evil that killed too many young people.

Today people are even more global. It is already hard to pitch a nation against another, and it is becoming harder and harder to pitch religions against each other.

Some fringe elements are still fighting on these things, but the concept of global humanity is looming large and becoming more mainstream than these fighting elements in many places.

What is left is the final struggle - between the idea of a world accepting to all, where friendships last across diversity and decency and compassion are the first principles as we work towards a better future for all, versus those who want to maintain the old tribal way. Once Global Humanity and Decency prevail, war will come to an end and love and compassion will rule the world. Now that so many of us have seen the light, the day shall not be far. So work for it, by endorsing peace everywhere as much as possible, and by carrying this hope and fighting for decency and the right of everyone to enjoy a good life in all events. It will be more than worth the determination.

End of War #2 - A Way to Understanding

Wars happen because of conflict. A way to end conflict is by increasing understanding between people.

I think a good place to start is always to look at the common goals, before looking at why the differences exist. After all, all people want a good life, love, family and all religions and good philosophy want to free us from the illusions that is this world and achieve better things spiritually, something which I personally think is very important. Those people who favour new social models/institutions are usually not opposed to traditional social structures, they just want to expand them so their spirit can be brought to more people or brought more in line with modern living experiences.

Minor (or even major from some perspectives) disagreements on language should be, and can

be, solved, and this should be a way of moving forward.

Conflict also happens because there is not enough space for everyone to live well. It could be the scarcity of resources, especially in primitive societies, but it is often about cultural institutions not able to tolerate each other, and this is often the cause in advanced societies where resources are not that scarce. If we had more institutions that suited different kinds of people, institutions that celebrated diversity but are nonetheless roughly equal in standing, then we don't have to fight for control of the same institutions.

Instead, we can have a lot of institutions for different people, which bridge with each other in a smooth and mutually understanding way.

What can you do to help in this? You could help to create institutions that benefit your own associated communities in the first place, you are in a good position because you know them

best. The second, ethical thing to do is to help create good bridges between your community and the rest of the world, to communicate what your people are about so people can understand you better, and to strive for an equal standing for your people and institutions in the big place that is this world (without disrespecting others to have their own culture and institutions), so most people can understand your people, and fights between your people and others can be prevented.

End of War #3 - Looking at the Lifestyle Wars

The 'lifestyle wars' are some of the best gasoline that has been poured into the fire of war to keep it burning through history - to end the lifestyle wars would thus be important in bringing war to an end. Fortunately in the modern world most people are live-and-let-live when they are not themselves threatened, which means that lifestyle wars are often fringe. That said, they still have a great impact. For example, much of fundamentalist Islam's hate for the West is based on lifestyle - to some extent 'they hate our freedoms' is right indeed. From this, we can also see how evil and vitreous lifestyle wars can be.

So if most people today don't participate in lifestyle wars, who starts them? From my observations, it is usually those who are themselves the prejudice, hating type. The tactic often used is to justify their hatred by

some logic, often elevated to holy levels through unusual, often blatantly incorrect interpretations of religious texts, e.g. racism is justified because God wants the races to be separate, Gays are unnatural because they can't reproduce, etc. etc. Most of us know that this is all quite rubbish, because we know we can live a happy, moral and spiritual life without acknowledging any of this. (In fact I think taking up racism and homophobia and hurting minorities in a way that flies in the face of any standard of decency will certainly prevent a moral life!) What we need to do, however, is to firmly stand by the fact that we know this is rubbish, and secure the borders of our everyday life and culture against people who wish to promote any of these extremist ways.

Lifestyle wars are not started by us, the sane majority.

They are imported from the land of extremists and can spread like a virus causing people to be

hurt and the morality of compassion to be seriously compromised.

We must be strong in our defence of our culture and everyday life against such plagues.

Somebody Needs to do Something About This

Many of today's young people have too many things facing them, and are often ill prepared to actually face the challenges of the real world as an adult. In today's complex, very interactive world, young people (especially those in the teenage age group) need to be more informed about the world around them and their choices.

Generations ago those choices were very limited, but now they have expanded so much that for young people to live a happy, healthy, safe and fulfilling life, help and information should be more forthcoming. This is a dream of mine, something that I want to see happen a lot more of.

Getting More People to Vote

Getting more people to enrol and vote at elections is a problem worldwide.

The reason why people aren't voting is because people don't see something in it for them. It is both because that people are not engaged enough in the world and cannot be motivated by the issues, or that the politicians are not putting out material worthy enough for people to consider spending part of a working day lining up in booths. Not that we don't have good issues at stake right now: being responsible about the environment, the future of Iraq, the future of world peace in general, equal rights for all people, in short, issues that may define the world as a decent place or a not so decent one. We are seeing some of the most important arguments being played out since the 1970s. So why don't people think that it is important to participate in the process? The real answer is

that, they don't think it matters. They don't think what they have to say anymore. Many have tuned out of the great debates of the world, and therefore don't even know enough about what's at stake to get active. We need to change that, or otherwise, no amount of persuasion is going to change the situation of widespread apathy .

On a better note, although there is still widespread apathy, more people are interested in issues than say, 10 years ago .

Maybe Iraq and the threat of terrorists, the rise of religious fundies and all that have woken us up. In other words, there is a change back to activism, albeit slowly. Do you want to be part of the change back to activism? Start by displaying your beliefs publicly, which you can do in various ways from the clothes (and accessories) you wear to just simply talking about important world issues in your everyday conversations. Everything in life is interconnected, and nothing is really too small

for small talk. Also, remember to learn more about emerging issues, so that you can make a stand on it, and help steer this world in the direction of decency and compassion towards everyone .

No More Revenge Based Laws: Back to Decent and Effective Law Enforcement

'Law and order' is always a major election issue. But too often, the populist viewpoint taken up by both sides of politics is that there should be harsher penalties for crimes, as if all crimes were murder. But does it really help to lock people up 10 years for petty crime? If it does, certainly countries like the USA would be crime-free, especially the 'executions rule' South. But they don't appear to be any more crime-free than more 'lenient' places like Europe.

And why does crime happen in the first place - why don't you and I go and deal drugs and rob banks, but why do some people do so? It doesn't take an academic to answer this - people who are locked out of life too much commit crime, because have no other tool than this to get things for themselves, and because they often don't understand why it is important

to not commit crime. If these people had better access to an equal life, had a better chance to work for their dreams, I certainly believe they would choose the latter. That's why I would rather see shorter sentences in which these people are rehabilitated and also convictions being spent with the possibility for records expunged via a formal Pardons system within 5 years for all crimes except rape, murder, major fraud and terrorism. Getting these people back onto their destiny ASAP is the only way to stop them from re-offending.

And it is immoral to torture people like this too - petty criminals are people too. They are in the same boat as us, perhaps a more disadvantaged area. But it is the same boat, and on this boat we dream of sailing toward 'the light' which is a good community for all, and in this boat we treat each other like brothers and sisters.

Revenge is stupid when crimes often happen because of ignorance and delusion, most of us know, but how many of us actually practice it?

A New Approach to Anti-Discrimination

Anti-discrimination law (ADLs) can be a hassle, as seen in recent US House and Congress troubles over a bill that would protect people from employment discrimination. A lot of people don't like the fact that we are protecting some special groups of people not everyone likes. Truth is that, these people have always existed, but without modern visibility they are safer from hassle from people who don't like them. Now society has forever changed and brought us this new problem, and I think the best bet will be to bring the old coolness back. We definitely need some ADLs in this society, but I think a 'general ADL' would put out arguments about specific interest groups and stop shedding unwanted spotlight upon them.

Here is one general principle to anti-discrimination I am proposing: "People cannot be discriminated for things that are unrelated to

the relevant activity. For example, if the person can get the job done and is not being lazy or offensive, their race, gender, age, how they look, how they dress, AND ALL OTHER IRRELEVANT THINGS should not matter." This can be enshrined in law if needed, but even better, it should be enshrined as a social value. It doesn't matter if I don't like what someone does, mutual respect is the basis for an equal society.

Forget about Subprime, this is the Real Crisis

More and more people are moving back home to live with their parents in the bad economy - and not just people in their 20s.

Some will be quick to blame these 'parasites'.

But wait - what else can you do if you were in their situation - no job, no finances, no hope of ever owning a home in the present climate? Stop blaming people for their 'personal responsibility' and wake up to the national crisis! We should all pull together and think about this crisis. Bottom line is that, if people go through 12 years of school and 4 years of college and still end up like this, our society is wasting a lot of brilliant minds. And whilst some may blame the 'inevitability' of this as part of the economy, is that true? Common sense tells me it is NOT! Forget the 'subprime' and all that. The fact that so many people are going to waste is the real crisis.

What we need to do is to start helping people go along more smoothly in life so that their potential can be realised. Governments have their part to play, so do everyday people. The first thing is to realise that it is unfair that some people are being wasted like this. The next is to do something about it. The latter won't be easy, but it's essential that we realise and start.

Lowering the Voting Age

I am all for lowering the voting age from 18 to 16. This has been my position consistently, from when I was below 16, right up until now, and I cannot see any reason for me to change it.

Frankly, I don't see why 16 year olds should not be able to vote. 16 year olds are often political (I was), and are mature enough to cast a vote for the future of the nation. In fact, increasing the pool of young voters by doing this will certainly shift the political focus more towards the future, as young people are more likely to care about the future and accept the new ideas like tolerance and equality. This will become especially important as the population ages through time due to shrinking birth rates (something that I find sad personally and therefore recommend that every couple have at least 3 children if they can, but something that we must face up to for now).

I am willing to support this even if it means that other things I support (like raising the drinking age from 18 to 21 in those places where it hasn't been done so yet) go out the window. Lowering the voting age is an issue of ultimate importance to me.

Let's Pay Stay-at-home Moms an Allowance

Feminists just have to face this - a significant proportion of mothers would love to be stay-at-home moms. And there's not a problem with this choice - it's because of their nature, and it's a very legitimate choice.

Some have raised concerns about this making them dependent on men. I say, it doesn't have to be this way. The government can pay stay-at-home moms an allowance to allow them to be financially independent, in lieu of childcare services. This should also apply to single moms. While we are at it, let's extend it to home dads too.

Support for Limiting the Number of Working Hours

I support legislating to discourage employers from getting employees to work too many hours. Not a ridiculously low number like 35 - but we don't want to live in a nation full of people who work 65 hour weeks every week. Not in the 2010s. There are two reasons to this. And it has something to do with the recent advent of female equality too.

The first, obvious one is that it damages a family to have both parents work at that rate. Even with one parent working a 60-70 hour week on a long term basis and another parent working the usual 40 hours, you have got a lot of stress. In the past people (men) were able to work that many hours because they did not have to care for the family. Now that both men and women are working, both need to take enough time to care for their families too.

The other reason is that companies will usually only employ more people if there was a need to. A law limiting the number of working hours means that companies will have to employ more people to complete their work, rather than just paying overtime to a smaller number of employees. This may not cost the company more really, but it does create employment for more people. And this is very important, especially in times of economic downturn.

Also from TaraElla...

The Princess's Spirit Trilogy #1: A Noughties Princess Spirit Story

The early 21st century is a time of unprecedented opportunity for those coming of age. It is a time when many young adults set out to achieve their dreams, be it starting their own business, starting a political movement, or propelling themselves to superstardom. Angelle's dream is to become Cultural Royalty of Pacificland, thus achieving what her mother couldn't. Her vision is based on freedom, dreams, love and fairness for all. However, she soon finds that whilst change appears to be in the air, the resistance is often even greater. And when the forces against change mobilise, those wanting a slice of success often bow to their agenda, while those fighting for change simply give up. With her own dreams on the line, will Angelle stay true to her values? And if she does, will it be enough to make a positive difference? Life isn't meant to be easy, but are there rewards for the brave at the end?